The Goodness of God

OUR SECURITY IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

1 Peter 3:13 And who is he that will harm you if ye be zealous of that which is good?

Peter speaks often of the persecutions of the early disciples, their sufferings and punishments and hardships they must endure because they belonged to X.

Because of the superstitions, prejudices and wrong beliefs by which the world at the time of X was held in bondage, the early Xns had to suffer persecution to a degree of martrydom never equalled since. Their sufferings were indeed appalling.

Because they were Xns the early followers of X suffered unto death, but also because they were Xns they were freed from thei sufferings and themselves became the rulers of the world, Xty supplanting the various forms of heathen religion.

This victory over the world of ignorance and superstition and prejudice may be accounted for in two ways. The early Xns were sustained by God's Holy Spirit by a reliance upon X's infallible promises, and by an undoubting confidence in the life to come. And secondly, the standard of moral living which governed the conduct of Xns was so superior to all other standards of living that people began to recognize it, in spite of their superstitions and prejudices. And tjeir recognition of it led to their adoption of it.

These two ways are practically one and the same, but for our purpose this morning I wish to cinsider at length the latter. Our text tells us that if a man be zealous of that which is good no harm can come to him. The providence of God in a peculiar manner watches over the righteous to protect and care for them. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." "Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?"

I The Way of God's righteousness is Straight.

"Straight is the way that leadeth unto life."

1.

1. Those who follow that which is good walk in a straight path. The path of right may sometimes be narrow and steep, but it is always straight. No crooked corners to turn or turtuous windings to follow.

Straight lime pipe from house to flume.

Easier to be an out-and-out Xn, clear over on the right side of moral questions, than to compromise

II. Xns of Righteousness walk in a ~~straight~~ safe path.

This is just what Peter emphasizes. However straight or hard or rugged the path of righteousness may be, it is a secur- one. While walking it nothing can harm you. No pitfalls or snares or dangers on this road. All fellow-travelers on it are safe companions. All who walk it are in fellowship with God. And if God be with you, what matters who may be against you? They walk with God, and God will not harm them because He is all love and goodness Himself. No events or circumstances of life can crush you along the way of God s righteousness, for such are not blind furtuitous concurrence but under the control of a loving Heavenly Father. In God and Christ and the Holy Spititwe have an all-powerful defense. We are more than conquerors thru Him that loveth us.

It is true that the ungodly scoff at the godly and the forces of evil plot against the righteous. Evil, to-day, seems to have an upper hand in many ways. Men, because of their stand for law and order are being crushed and even murdered. Yes, the righteous still have to endur a great deal attimes, but they cannot be crushed utterly. For however powerful the forces of evil may become, they seem to be under a certain restriction, and when they go so far they break to pieces. And the forces of right-eousness usually emerge from such encounters with the forces of evil all the stronger and the better for it. To him that overcometh is given the crown of life.

Not even death can overcome Xns who live their lives in the righteousness of God. Death has no sting for them

III. The followers of that which is good walk in a happy pa path.

Their very sense of security and companionship with God makes them happy. A peace comes to one such as can come only as he lives right, onlys as he does that which is right and good and just.

Dont ever pity true Xns, however seemingly they are suffe ing. They are infinitely happier than the ones who are trying to harm them. A well man without X is not nearly so happy as a dying person in X. A free man without X is not nearly so happy as a slave or prisoner with X.

Conclu. Be straight. Walk the straight path of righteousness. Follow after that whih is good. And you shall live!